DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 039 289 UD 010 001

AUTHOR Faunce, R. W.
TITLE Attitudes and Characteristics of Effective and Not Effective Teachers of Culturally Disadvantaged Children.
INSTITUTION Minneapolis Public Schools, Minn.
PUB DATE Oct 69
NOTE 18p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.00
DESCRIPTORS Bias, Culturally Disadvantaged, *Disadvantaged Youth, *Effective Teaching, *Elementary School Teachers, Empathy, Handicapped Students, Lower Class Students, Middle Class Values, Negro Students, Questionnaires, Racial Discrimination, *Teacher Attitudes, Teacher Characteristics, *Teacher Evaluation

ABSTRACT

This study of attitudes of elementary school teachers in the Minneapolis Public School System revealed a marked discrepancy between attitudes of successful and non-successful teachers of lower class black children. An analysis of a 186 item questionnaire showed that the effective teachers displayed empathy and commitment to teach disadvantaged children, were generally more experienced in teaching this kind of student, and felt that their students have been wronged by society. The non-effective teacher tended to be prejudiced and to ignore the physical deprivations students faced. (KG)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED039289

Attitudes and Characteristics of Effective and Not Effective Teachers of Culturally Disadvantaged Children

R. W. Faunce

Minneapolis Public Schools

The apparent discrepancy between the values of middle class school teachers and low income "culturally disadvantaged" children has led to a theory of culture conflict (Davis, 1940). This theory suggests that differences in values lead to classroom situations which are inappropriate for low income children. Because teachers cannot understand or appreciate the values of low income children, or because these values are in conflict with traditional educational goals and methods, little education takes place and teachers are demoralized. Presumably the attitude of middle class teachers toward disadvantaged children is unfavorable; either as cause or effect.

This paper reports a study which attempted to measure differences in attitudes toward disadvantaged children held by teachers considered effective with these children and by teachers considered not effective. Three questions were asked: (a) Do effective teachers of the culturally disadvantaged hold attitudes which differ from the attitudes of teachers who are not effective with the disadvantaged?, (b) If so, in what ways do they differ?, and (c) What characteristics of teachers are related to these attitudes?

UD010001

Studies by other investigators have indicated that little profit

might be expected from explorations of teacher characteristics. The complex interaction of philosophy of education, varying criteria of effectiveness, criterion and predictor bias, and pupil-teacher interaction make validity of findings from individual investigations suspect, and generalization of results all but impossible (see for example, Domas & Tiedman, 1950; Howsam, 1963; Peterson, 1964). The present study focussed on a construct validity approach to the selection of criterion samples of Effective and Not Effective teachers and confined its focus to effectiveness with disadvantaged children. It was hoped that the construct approach would offer some improvement in the selection of criterion measures and that the subgrouping of pupils would help to simplify the complexity of interacting factors.

Data Collection and Sampling

A questionnaire containing 186 statements regarding culturally disadvantaged children was constructed based on a review of the literature, observation of students and teachers, and suggestions by experts. Responses to each statement were ordered along a four-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Intermediate responses were disagree (2) and agree (3).

Fourteen subject matter categories were represented in approximately equal numbers in the questionnaire. These categories were: communications, delinquency, teachers, health, mental ability, parents, physical surroundings, race, self-concept, work, teaching methods,

physical appearance, peers and siblings, and "culture."

Questionnaires were distributed to all regular classroom elementary teachers and usable questionnaires were completed by 777 elementary school teachers in the Minneapolis Public School system in the early part of 1965. About 62% of all elementary teachers in the system responded. Significantly higher returns were obtained from low income schools.

Additional information regarding teacher characteristics was obtained from personnel files.

Procedures

Several items were used to help define criterion samples of Effective and Not Effective teachers of the disadvantaged. These items included peer nominations of teachers considered: (a) effective with disadvantaged children, (b) not effective with disadvantaged children, and (c) effective with middle class children but not effective with disadvantaged children. Requests for transfer into or out of low income schools; a self-rating describing the respondent's feeling about teaching the disadvantaged; personnel office file information reflecting teachers', parents' and principals' views; and years of experience teaching disadvantaged children were also used as criterion determinants. Only teachers who claimed one or more years experience in teaching disadvantaged children were included in the two criterion samples.

The sample of Not Effective teachers consisted of 97 teachers

experienced with disadvantaged children who: (1) had personnel file information (comments from principals, administrative staff, and parents) which indicated that they were ineffective with, or did not wish to teach, low income children,(2) received one or more peer ratings of "not effective",(3) received no peer ratings as "effective", (4) had requested transfers <u>from</u> low income schools, and (5) claimed that they did not wish to teach disadvantaged children. These criteria applied to the group. Each teacher in the group did not meet each of these criteria.

Effective teachers were 210 teachers who claimed one or more years experience with disadvantaged children and (1) had personnel file information which indicated that they were effective with, or preferred to teach low income children, (2) received one or more peer ratings as effective, (3) received no peer ratings of not effective, or effective with middle class children only, (4) had requested transfers from high income schools and (5) stated a preference for teaching low income children.

Responses of Effective and Not Effective teachers to each of the 186 questionnaire items were compared. Twenty-five items were responded to in a significantly different manner by the two groups of teachers. These 25 items (called Q-25 for the remainder of this paper) were factor analyzed using a sample of 470 teachers, all of whom had at least one year experience with disadvantaged children. (The two criterion samples were included in this expanded sample and constituted about two-thirds of the teachers in the factor analysis sample). About

37% of all Minneapolis elementary school teachers were included in the factor analysis.

Results

Nine factors related to teacher attitudes toward the disadvantaged were revealed by the analysis. Responses of Effective teachers were consistently different from responses of Not Effective teachers on six of the nine factors.

Our first question is answered. Effective teachers of the culturally disadvantaged do hold attitudes which differ from the attitudes of teachers who are not effective with the disadvantaged. An answer to the second question, how do these attitudes differ, is suggested by an analysis of the six differentiating factors.

Factor I was labeled Acceptance vs. Rejection of Physical Deprivation. Effective teachers tended to accept the fact that the disadvantaged do, in fact, suffer from certain physical and material deprivations which others do not. Not Effective teachers scored closer to the end of the dimension which denied that such physical-material deprivations exist. The relative nature of the differences in factor scores was emphasized, since most teachers in both criterion samples were in agreement.

Factor II suggested that Effective teachers were more likely to believe that disadvantaged youth have been discriminated against by society. Not Effective teachers leaned in the direction of believing that equal opportunity exists for all and that society has not been

unfair to the disadvantaged or minority child. Factor II was called Equality vs. Discrimination.

Factor III appeared to be related to stereotyping, possibly on the basis of presumed genetic factors. Poor children can be recognized by their appearance. Negroes are genetically lazy. Creative children score high on IQ tests. Possibly this factor is one aspect of the hereditarian vs. environmentalist controversy. The title Stereotyping vs. Restraint in Labelling is suggested.

Factor IV was a rather clear cut Unpleasantness vs. Pleasantness of Teaching the disadvantaged.

Factor V seemed related to Factor I, Denial of Physical Deprivation, although there was an added aspect. In Factor V as in Factor I there appeared to be a denial of certain problems among the disadvantaged (e.g. children from disadvantaged homes are not more likely to have verbal problems or to have physical handicaps than middle class children) but there was also an implication that those who exhibit symptoms of the disadvantaged should be punished ("dropouts should be drafted") since anyone can succeed in the United States if he really wants to. Punitive Denial vs. Non-Punitive Acceptance appears to be an appropriate title.

Factor VI was somewhat ambiguous, but it suggested again a denial of certain differences. In this case, it seemed to suggest that there is no such thing as cultural difference. Tentatively, it is called Culture Denial vs. Acceptance of the Culture (of poverty).

Factors VII - IX did not separate Effective and Not Effective Teachers.

What characteristics of teachers were related to the attitudes described by the six factors? Is it possible to identify effective teachers of disadvantaged children? To answer these questions, a scoring key was developed for questionnaire Q-25 and scores were then correlated with a large number of teacher characteristics. High scores on Q-25 were obtained by teachers who gave responses similar to responses of Effective teachers; low scores - similar to Not Effective teachers.

Correlations between teacher characteristics and scores on the questionnaire are shown in Tables 1 and 2. The number of teachers involved varies because information was not available for all teachers on each measure.

Excepting the criterion selection variables, all correlations were of a very low order. Books read on the topic of the disadvantaged, family socioeconomic status, the proportion of low income children in the current class, self-estimate of experience with disadvantaged children, race, high school rank and Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (MTAI) scores, yielded significant correlations ranging from .09 to .22. Negroes and teachers who claimed they came from low socioeconomic backgrounds scored higher than whites or teachers from upper middle class families. Other correlations mentioned were positive and in the expected direction. The Hy scale of the MMPI correlated -.31 with Q-25 for males. No other Multiphasic scales yielded significant correlations, although the Hy scale correlation for females was in the same direction (-.11).

Table 1

Correlations Between Biographical Characteristics and Q-25 Scores for Elementary Teachers Having at Least One Year Experience With Culturally Disadvantaged Children

Characteristic	Correlation Coefficient	N
Years Taught	-.06	469
Years Taught Disadvantaged Children	-.03	470
Experience with Disadvantaged	.20**	468
Proportion Disadvantaged in 1963-64 Class	.18**	385
Economic Status of 1963-64 School (1 = Low Income, 4 = High Income)	-.05	468
Peer Ratings--Effective	.18**	470
Peer Ratings--Not Effective	.00	470
Peer Ratings--Middle Class Only	-.07	470
Age	-.03	454
Marital Status[a] (1 = single, 2 = married)	-.08	420
Sex[a] (1 = Male; 2 = Female)	.04	470
Race[a] (1 = Negro; 2 = white)	-.09*	461
Region[a] (0 = Midwest; 1 = Other)	.01	468
Father's Education (1 - Grade school; 4 = College)	-.03	384
Father's Occupation (1 = Professional; 6 = Unskilled)	.03	379

[a]Point biserial correlations
*Significantly different from zero at .05 level
**Significantly different from zero at .01 level

Table 1 continued

Characteristic	Correlation Coefficient	N
Childhood S.E. Status (1 = Upper; 6 = Lower)	.12*	460
U. of Minnesota Graduate[a] (1 = Yes; 2 = No)	-.07	465
Highest Degree Obtained	.09	375
Preference for Teaching Disadvantaged Children (1 = Prefer Not to; 5 = Prefer to)	.35**	437
Books Read (No.)	.22**	470
Courses Taken[a] (1 = Yes; 2 = No)	.04	441
Principal's Rating	-.02	463
High School Rank	.20**	174
Minnesota Scholastic Aptitude Test	.24	34
MTAI	.20*	102
File Information (1 = Favorable; 2 = Unfavorable)	-.40**	111
Transfer by School S. E. Status (1 = From Low Income; 4 = From High Income)	.08	223

[a]Point biserial correlations
*Significantly different from zero at .05 level
**Significantly different from zero at .01 level

Table 2

Product Moment Correlation Coefficients of MMPI Raw Scores and Q-25 Scores for Elementary School Teachers Having at Least One Year Experience with Disadvantaged Children

Scale No.	MMPI Scale	Correlation Coefficients Males (N=64)	Females (N=240)
	L	.231	.013
	F	-.196	-.096
	K	-.169	.029
1.	Hs	.051	-.016
2.	D	.006	-.107
3.	Hy	-.301*	-.108
4.	Pd	.029	-.056
5.	Mf	-.130	.088
6.	Pa	-.032	.027
7.	Pt	-.060	.081
8.	Si	.005	-.053
9.	Ma	.052	.049
0.	Si	.127	-.029

Note: Only profiles with valid Question scores are included.

*$p < .05$

File information proved to be the single most predictive variable among the criterion selection variables ($r = -.48$). In combination with self-ratings of attitude toward the disadvantaged, which correlated .35 with the questionnaire, file information yielded a multiple correlation of .56. Transfer requests and peer ratings of Not Effective and Effective with Middle Class Children Only did not correlate significantly while peer ratings of Effective teachers yielded a significant correlation of .18.

Discussion

Effective teachers do differ in attitudes toward disadvantaged children from teachers who are Not Effective with these children. At least they answer questionnaires in quite a different manner. Just how they differ may be dramatically expressed by presenting hypothetical models of Effective and Not Effective teachers of disadvantaged children suggested by this study. Minor differences revealed by the study are exaggerated for expository purposes.

The Effective teacher recognizes the existence of physical, material deprivation. She accepts the existence of a sub-culture of poverty as fact. She is willing to admit that there are special problems related to this subculture and to teaching children who are reared in the sub-culture. At the same time, she does not have a punitive view of the disadvantaged. The Effective teacher restrains from labelling and from attributing problems of the disadvantaged to genetic or innate causes. She denies that teaching disadvantaged children is more unpleasant than teaching children from middle class homes. Finally, she tends to side

with the disadvantaged against some of the traditional mores of society. She feels that equal opportunity does not exist for the culturally disadvantaged. To some extent, they are culturally disadvantaged because they have been discriminated against by the predominant society.

The teacher who is not effective in teaching disadvantaged children tends to reject the existence of material poverty. This is the Affluent Society! Children from disadvantaged homes are not more likely to have physical handicaps, to have difficulty with verbal expression, or to be delinquent. In fact, no such thing as a subculture of poverty exists. All Americans have equal opportunity for success. People who do not succeed are probably innately lazy or may have some other form of genetic deficiency. They should be punished for their deficiencies or lack of effort. The ineffective teacher recognizes and stereotypes the disadvantaged pupil. Such pupils she finds unpleasant to teach.

The major distinction between the effective and the ineffective teacher appears easily summarized. The effective teacher recognizes and accepts the problems of the disadvantaged without rejecting the people who have these problems. The ineffective teacher denies the existence of these problems, while at the same time, rejecting or punishing the people who exhibit symptoms of these problems. Put simply, the effective teacher is one who exhibits empathy; the ineffective teacher is one who lacks empathy, is closeminded, or is prejudiced.

Results from the factor analysis should be considered as a stimulus for more definitive study. The factoring was contaminated by the

necessary inclusion of criterion samples in the factoring sample. Further exploration with non-contaminated samples and comparisons of factor scores with objectively recorded classroom behavior appear to be logical next steps.

What are the characteristics of Effective and Not Effective teachers of culturally disadvantaged children? Some of the things which proved to be unrelated to attitudes toward disadvantaged children are worth noting. Age was not related to attitude, nor was sex and years of teaching experience. Years of experience with disadvantaged children were not related to attitudes toward disadvantaged children. No relationship was found between attitudes and marital status, region of the country in which the teacher was reared, teaching effectiveness in general (as determined by principals' ratings), father's occupation and education, degrees held, and courses taken on the topic of the disadvantaged child. University of Minnesota graduates, and graduates of other colleges did not differ substantially in attitudes toward disadvantaged children. And, with one exception, personality traits measured by the MMPI were similar for Effective and Not Effective teachers.

Teachers' characteristics which were related to attitudes generally showed small, but statistically significant correlations. For theoretical purposes, the type of teacher who scored high on Q-25 is presented in an exaggerated, composite picture. It should be remembered that the description given is hypothetical and that the observed relationships were very small. Other measures of attitude are included in this description of teacher "characteristics."

What kind of teacher would tend to be Effective with culturally disadvantaged children? A composite picture of such a person suggests that the most important fact is that the teacher sees herself as committed to helping low income children. Thus, the Effective teacher claims that she prefers to work with disadvantaged children; that she has had high proportions of disadvantaged children in her classes, and that she has had considerable experience in teaching such children. She also states that she has read books on the topic.

Possibly this commitment colors the teacher's thinking to the point where she identifies with her disadvantaged students either consciously or subconsciously. Thus, she sees herself as having come from a lower socioeconomic class than her fellow teachers, although her father's educational and occupational level appear to have been equal to that of her peers. Whatever the case, her commitment to disadvantaged students is recognized by her fellow teachers, by parents, and by principals in the form of ratings and written file information. The Effective teacher tends to have more permissive attitudes toward children in general as measured by the MTAI. In addition, she appears to have achieved well in an academic setting at the high school level. Finally, the Negro teacher tends to score somewhat higher than the white teacher, although the difference is slight.

A low positive relationship was found between two measures of mental ability and the questionnaire. High school rank and MSAT scores correlated about .20 with Q-25, although the MSAT correlation did not differ significantly from zero. This finding is similar to the finding of a .13 correlation between MTAI and Miller Analogies

Test scores (Cook, Leads & Callis, 1951) and suggests that the relationship between Q-25 and intelligence, for the teaching population invovled, was negligible. Educational level also showed only a slight, non-significant correlation (.09).

Two measures of socioeconomic status suggested that teachers with low income backgrounds may have more favorable attitudes toward disadvantaged children. Teachers who said their own childhood was spent in lower class families, and Negro teachers, tended to score higher on Q-25. In each case the relationship was slight, but statistically significant. The finding is weakened by the possiblity that Negro teachers in the sample actually came from middle class, or upper class backgrounds. Results for father's occupation and father's education, while not of statistical significance, were in the suggested direction.

Summary

Three questions were explored in this study of elementary school teachers in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

1. Do effective teachers of the culturally disadvantaged hold attitudes which differ from the attitudes of teachers who are not effective with the disadvantaged?
2. If so, in what ways do they differ?
3. What characteristics of teachers are related to these attitudes?

An item analysis of a 186 item questionnaire showed that Effective teachers of disadvantaged children, defined by a number of criteria,

gave responses which differed significantly from Not Effective teachers far beyond chance expectations.

Attitudes clearly differed on six of nine factors revealed by a factor analysis of twenty-five items which statistically separated Effective and Not Effective teacher samples. Effective teachers recognized problems of the disadvantaged without rejecting the people. Not Effective teachers were inclined to ignore or deny that the problems existed while at the same time stereotyping the people involved and taking a punitive view toward them. In its most succinct form, a description of Effective teachers suggests empathy, while a description of Not Effective teachers suggests, lack of empathy, close mindedness, or prejudice.

Few teacher chracteristics appeared related to these attitudes. Teachers from low income backgrounds and Negro teachers tended to have more favorable attitudes, but these results were clouded by the techniques used to select criterion samples. Other measures which showed slight positive correlations with the questionnaire were high school rank and MTAI. The most important characteristic related to the questionnaire was the teacher's commitment to disadvantaged children. High scoring teachers preferred working with disadvantaged children, had high proportions of low income children in their classes, had considerable experience in teaching low income children, and apparently read many books on the topic. Their commitment to the disadvantaged was recognized by parents, fellow teachers, and principals. The effective teacher is seen as one who feels that society has been unfair

to the disadvantaged and is willing to speak out against these practices of society. Children are culturally disadvantaged not because they have no culture, but because the predominant culture has disadvantaged them. These results appear to support the culture-conflict theory propounded by Davis (1946), Mead (1951), Spindler (1955) and others.

Research Division
Office of Research, Development
and Federal Programs
Minneapolis Public Schools

October 1969

References

Cook, W. W., Leeds, C. H., & Callis, R. Minnesota teaching attitude inventory. New York: The Psychological Corporation, 1951.

Davis, A., & Dollard, D. Children of bondage. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1940.

Domas, S. J., & Tiedeman, D. Teacher competence: An annotated bibliography. Journal of Experimental Education, 1950, 19, 101-218.

Faunce, R. An investigation of the biographical and attitudinal characteristics of effective elementary school teachers of culturally disadvantaged children. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota) Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, Inc., 1968. No. 68-17,673.

Howsam, Robert B. Teacher Evaluation, facts and folklore. National Elementary Principal, November 1963, 43 (2), 6-17.

Mead, Margaret The school in American culture. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951.

Peterson, W. A. Age, teacher's role, and the institutional setting. Biddle, B. & Ellena, W. J. (Eds.), Contemporary research on teacher effectiveness. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

Spindler, G. D. Education in a transforming American culture. Harvard Educational Review, 1955, 25, 145-156.